



FULL COUNCIL

Wednesday, 24 March 2021

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Local authorities are required to have in place certain statutory officers, one of which is the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer who undertakes a range of key financial responsibilities.
2. Following the ill health retirement of the Council's Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer in October 2020 and the temporary appointment of Mr Brian Mew to this post, the Council has now successfully completed the formal recruitment process and this report is to update Members on the current situation regarding this position.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Wards Affected:	All Wards in East Suffolk
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Maurice Cook Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources
Supporting Officer:	Stephen Baker Chief Executive 01394 444378 stephen.baker@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and appoint one of their Officers to have responsibility for the administration of those affairs.
- 1.2 The Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is one of three statutory roles which the Council must have, the others being the Head of Paid Service and the Monitoring Officer. These roles have specific statutory duties assigned to them. The Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is responsible for the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Council which includes ensuring the lawfulness and financial prudence of the Council's decision-making, the administration of financial affairs, contributing to the corporate management of the Council and the provision of financial information and advice.
- 1.3 Following the ill health retirement of the former Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer, Simon Taylor-Buglione, in October 2020, Mr Brian Mew was temporarily appointed as the Council's Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer pending recruitment to this post.

2 APPOINTMENT OF A CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 2.1 Formal recruitment to the post began in January 2021 and as an Equal Opportunities employer, the post was widely advertised.
- 2.2 An Appointments Committee was held on Monday 1 March 2021 and this Committee unanimously agreed to offer the post to Mr Brian Mew on a permanent basis and Mr Mew accepted the appointment.
- 2.3 As detailed in the report to Full Council dated 25 November 2020, Mr Mew is extremely well qualified and has been an Accountant Member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy since 1989 and has an impressive track record of work experience and achievements, including support to East Suffolk Council and the predecessor councils on a consultancy basis.
- 2.4 Mr Brian Mew will continue as the Interim Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer until 31 March 2021 and will become the permanent postholder from 1 April 2021.

3 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 3.1 The East Suffolk Strategic Plan expects the Council to maintain the highest financial standards and governance arrangements thereby delivering against one of its five key themes which is to remain financially sustainable. Appointing a permanent Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is essential to meet both these and legislative requirements and to maintain the support the Council needs from its Financial Services Team.

4 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 places a legal requirement on the Council to have a Section 151 Officer in place.

5 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 There are no other issues.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Consultation was not necessary; a formal recruitment process was followed and the appointment was made by the Appointments Committee in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 No other option was considered given that the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer is required to be an Officer of the Council. The only viable option was therefore to recruit to the position on a permanent basis.

8 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 To ensure that the necessary financial governance arrangements are in place for East Suffolk Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That the formal appointment of Mr Brian Mew as the Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer for East Suffolk Council from 1 April 2021 be noted.

APPENDICES – None

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None